Message Text

PAGE 01 ROME 13293 301632Z

51
ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /031 W
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R 301530Z NOV 73
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2126
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

S E C R E T ROME 13293

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1 DECLASS IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE DATE.
TAGS: PFOR US IT SY XF
SUBJECT: ITALIAN INQUIRY ON POSSIBILITY THAT SECRETARY MAY VISIT
     DAMASCUS

1. ON NOVEMBER 30 RESPONSIBLE ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL
ASKED ABOUT PRESS REPORTS THAT THE SECRETARY WOULD BE VISITING A
NUMBER OF MID EASTERN CAPITALS INCLUDING DAMASCUS, AFTER NATO
MINISTERIAL MEETING IN BRUSSELS. WE RESPONDED THAT WE HAD NO
RPT NO INFORMATION ON REPORTED VISIT BY SECRETARY TO MID EAST.

2. OFFICIAL SAID ITALIANS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED WHETHER SECRET-
ARY MAY VISIT DAMASCUS BECAUSE OF ITALY'S ROLE AS PROTECTING
POWER FOR U.S. INTERESTS IN SYRIA. OFFICIAL RECALLED THAT ITALIAN
AMBASSADOR ORTONA HAD APPROACHED DEPARTMENT TWO WEEKS AGO
SUGGESTING THAT ITALIANS MIGHT BE HELPFUL IN FACILITATING U.S.
CONTACTS WITH SYRIANS ON SUBJECT OF RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS.
HE SAID FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS OF COURSE AWARE OTHAT U.S. WAS IN
DIRECT TOUCH WITH SYRIANS THROUGH SYRIAN UN MISSION.

3. OFFICIAL ASKED THAT WE KEEP ITALIANS CLOSELY INFORMED SHOULD
SECRETARY BE VISITING DAMASCUS AND OFFERED ITALIAN ASSISTANCE TO
FACILITATE ANY PLANS BEING MADE. WE THANKED OFFICIAL FOR OFFER
AND SAID WE WOULD QUERY DEPARTMENT ON SUBJECT.

4. COMMENT: GIVEN ITALIAN RESPONSIBILITY FOR U.S. INTERESTS IN
SYRIA, FONMIN OFFICIAL'S REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON POSSIBLE VISIT
   SECRET
   SECRET

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BY SECRETARY TO DAMASCUS IS FAIR ENOUGH. THEREFORE, IF SECRETARY
CONTEMPLATING VISIT TO DAMASCUS, WE REQUEST THAT WE BE PROVIDED
WITH AS MUCH ADVANCE INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE TO CONVEY TO ITAL-

IANS. IN ADDITION, WE SUGGEST THAT DEPARTMENT CONSIDER GIVING
ITALIANS AT LEAST A COSMETIC ROLE ON SCENE, SHOULD SECRETARY VISIT
SYRIA. VOLPE

  SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 11 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, PRESS COMMENTS, REPORTS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 NOV 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973ROME13293
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 XGDS-1 DECLASS IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE DATE.
Errors: n/a
Film Number: P850004-0048, P750020-1896
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731166/abqcegyq.tel
Line Count: 60
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN ROME
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 SEP 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18-Sep-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <26-Nov-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ITALIAN INQUIRY ON POSSIBILITY THAT SECRETARY MAY VISIT DAMASCUS
TAGS: PFOR, PEPR, US, IT, SY, XF
To: STATE INFO BEIRUT
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005